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1

Get Windows 7

This chapter will help you choose the best edition of Windows 7 for you. It compares the features and covers upgrading from a previous version of Windows, or moving up to a more advanced edition of Windows 7.

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Don't forget

There have been other releases of Microsoft Windows, intended for business and server computers, including Windows NT, Windows 2000, Windows Server 2003 and Windows Server 2008.

Windows 7

Windows 7 is the latest release of Microsoft Windows, the operating system for personal computers. There has been a long list of Windows releases including:

- 1995 Windows 95
- 1998 Windows 98
- 2000 Windows Me (Millennium Edition)
- 2001 Windows XP (eXPerience)
- 2003 Windows XP MCE (Media Center Edition)
- 2007 Windows Vista
- 2009 Windows 7

When you buy a new computer, it is usually shipped with the latest available release of Windows. This takes advantage of the hardware features generally available at the time. Every year sees new and more powerful features being incorporated into the latest computers. In line with this, the requirements for Microsoft Windows have increased steadily. For example, the minimum and recommended amounts of system memory have increased from Windows 95 (4 MB to 8 MB), Windows 98 (16 MB to 24 MB), Windows XP (64 MB to 128 MB), Windows Vista (512 MB to 1024 MB) and now Windows 7 (1 GB to 2 GB). There's a similar progression in terms of the processor power, the video graphics facilities and hard disk storage.

This means that your computer is likely to need upgrading in order to use a later release of Windows, unless you purchased your computer late in the life of the previous release and it already meets the newer requirements.

The extended hardware options allow the features and services offered by the various releases of Windows to be developed and improved. Each release enhances the existing features and adds new capabilities. Windows 7 is therefore able to provide all of the capabilities of Windows Vista and Windows XP, and also offer unique new features.

The value of all this is that you can use your computer to carry out tasks that would not have been possible with previous computers and operating system releases.

Hot tip

If you purchased a Windows Vista PC after June 26th 2009, you may be entitled to a free upgrade to Windows 7.

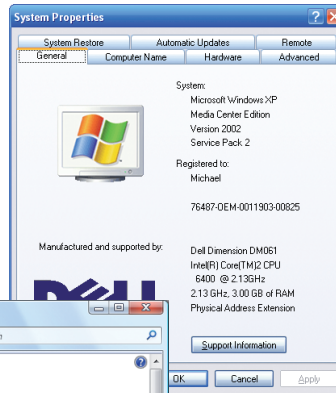
Which Release is Installed?

To check which release of Windows is currently installed on your system, you can look in System Properties.

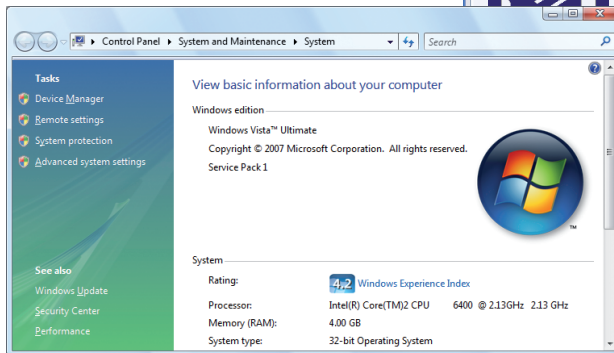
- 1 Press the Windows Logo key and the Break key (simultaneously) to display the System Properties
- 2 The operating system details will be displayed (along with user, memory and processor information)

The layout varies between releases of Windows, but similar details are shown.

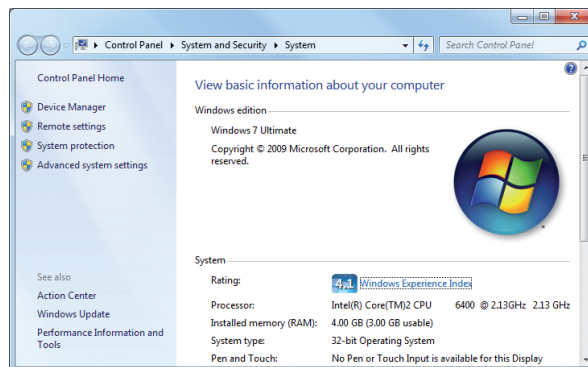
Windows XP



Windows Vista



Windows 7



Hot tip



You can also open System Properties from the Control Panel, or you can right-click the Computer icon and select Properties.

Don't forget



This shows the system properties (on the same computer) for Windows XP, Windows Vista and Windows 7.

Hot tip



Note that there is 4 GB installed, but Windows only uses 3 GB (except when you have a 64-bit edition installed).

Hot tip

Aero is an acronym for Authentic, Energetic, Reflective, and Open, and it incorporates a transparency effect known as Aero Glass.

Don't forget

Some programs can add relevant tasks to their Jump Lists. For example, Windows Media Player has options to Play All Music or to resume your last playlist. Internet Explorer offers frequently visited and recently viewed websites.

Features of Windows 7

Taskbar and Previews

You can pin any program to the taskbar so it's always ready to use. When you have started a program, hover over the taskbar button and you'll see thumbnails of every window open in that program. Hover over one of the thumbnails, and the Aero Peek feature lets you see a full-screen preview of that window. Move the cursor off the thumbnail and the full-screen preview disappears.

Jump Lists

The new Jump List feature allows you to access the documents you've used recently, when you right-click the associated program's task button on the taskbar. If there are other files you want to access quickly, you can pin them to the Jump List so they always appear.

Desktop enhancements

Windows 7 offers new ways to handle the windows on your desktop. For example, the Snap feature lets you pull a window to either side edge of the screen to fill half the screen. You can Snap windows to both sides of the screen, to make it easy to compare those windows.

To clear your desktop, just move your mouse to the lower right corner of your desktop. Using the Aero Peek feature, the open Windows become transparent, so you can see the shortcuts and gadgets on your desktop. There's also an Aero Shake function. Grab the top of one window and shake it, all the other open windows will minimize to the taskbar. Shake the window again, and they'll all come back.

Aero Themes let you personalize the background, color, sound and screen saver used on your system, with a single selection from a range of interesting styles, or you can customize your own theme.

Windows Search

Windows Search helps you find anything on your PC quickly and easily, using the search box at the bottom of the Start menu. Windows 7 libraries show all content of a

...cont'd

particular type in one spot, and Windows Search makes it even simpler to find items, with filters to customize your search.

Internet Explorer 8

The latest version of the Windows web browser, Internet Explorer 8 features innovations to the address bar, search, tabs, and the Favorites bar. For example, as you type a search request you'll immediately start seeing relevant suggestions from your chosen search provider, complete with images when available.

HomeGroup

HomeGroup is set up automatically when you add the first PC running Windows 7 to your home network. When you add more PCs running Windows 7 to the home network, they join the HomeGroup, and they can share files and printers with each other.

View Available Network (VAN)

Windows 7 makes viewing and connecting to all of your networks simple and consistent, whether the networks are based on Wi-Fi, mobile broadband, dial-up or your company's VPN.

Windows Touch

With a touch-screen monitor, you touch your computer screen to scroll, resize windows, play media, pan and zoom. The Start menu, Windows Taskbar, Windows Explorer and Internet Explorer are all touch-enabled. Windows 7 also supports multi-touch technology, where you control what happens on the screen with more than one finger, using a variety of gestures.

Windows Live Essentials

Windows Live Essentials provides features that were included in previous versions of Windows Vista. You can download the latest releases of those programs from the Internet, and also integrate what you do on your PC with associated online services.

Hot tip



Search uses your browsing history to narrow the list of suggestions. When you see what you're looking for, you can select that item from the list.

Beware



Some features are only available in particular editions of Windows 7, or have specific hardware prerequisites.

Don't forget

The terms 32-bit and 64-bit relate to the way the processor handles memory. You'll also see the terms x86 and x64 used for 32-bit and 64-bit respectively.

Beware

The product functions and the graphics capabilities may vary depending on the system configuration.

What's Needed

The minimum configuration recommended by Microsoft to install and run Windows 7 is as follows:

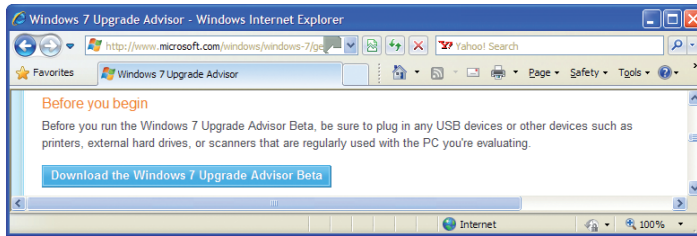
- Processor 1 GHz 32-bit or 64-bit
- System memory 1 GB (32-bit) or 2 GB (64-bit)
- Graphics DirectX 9 graphics device with WDDM 1.0 driver
- Hard disk drive 16 GB (32-bit) or 20 GB (64-bit) free
- Optical drive DVD/CD (for installation purposes)

There may be additional requirements for some features, for example:

- SVGA display monitor with 1024x768 or higher resolution is recommended for some applications
- Internet access, for online services and features such as Windows Update
- TV tuner, for Windows Media Center functions
- Touch specific hardware, for touch functions
- A network and multiple PCs running Windows 7, for HomeGroup file and printer sharing
- An optical drive with rewriter function, for DVD/CD authoring and backup function
- Trusted Platform Module (TPM) 1.2 hardware for BitLocker encryption
- USB flash drive, for BitLocker To Go
- An additional 1 GB memory, 15 GB extra hard disk space, and a processor with Intel VT or AMD-V hardware virtualization, for Windows XP Mode
- Audio output (headphones or speakers), for music and sound in Windows Media Center or Media Player

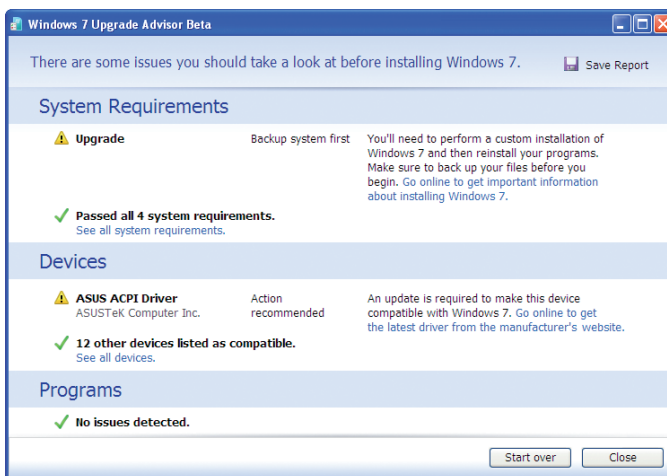
Upgrade Advisor

To have your computer assessed to see if it is able to support Windows 7, visit the website www.microsoft.com/windows/windows-7/get/upgrade-advisor.aspx and click the link to download the Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor.



Run this program to install the Upgrade Advisor and follow the prompts to install and launch the program. This will generate a report to tell you if any changes are needed to support Windows 7 on your computer. It also identifies any incompatible software or accessories that you may have.

For example, when run on an Asus Eee PC netbook computer currently running Windows XP, the Upgrade Advisor says that this passes all four system requirements.



However, you are warned that you need to perform a custom installation of Windows 7, then reinstall your programs. Upgrade from Windows XP to Windows 7 is not supported.

Hot tip



If your computer runs Windows XP or Vista, it may already be able to run Windows 7, perhaps with a hardware upgrade. Computers running earlier versions of Windows are unlikely to have the necessary capabilities.

Beware



An update to the ACPI driver is recommended, though this would happen automatically when you carry out the full installation.

Don't forget

For the home user and small business, the main choices are the Home Premium edition and the Professional edition.

Don't forget

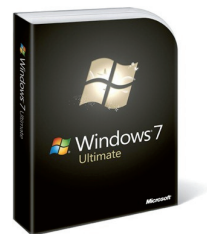
For the business user, the main choices are the Professional and the Enterprise editions.

Windows 7 Editions

There are six editions of Windows 7, with each edition being a superset of the one after it in the list.

Windows 7 Ultimate

Ultimate is available as a retail package and for pre-install, but is not volume-licensed. It has the full set of Windows 7 features, the same as the Enterprise edition.



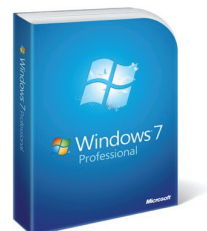
Windows 7 Enterprise

Enterprise is for volume-license business use only, and is not supplied as a retail package or for pre-install.

Features exclusive to the Ultimate and Enterprise editions include security features such as AppLocker and BitLocker, plus support for multilingual user interfaces.

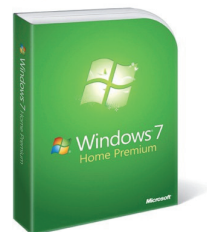
Windows 7 Professional

Professional is provided as a retail package and for pre-install. It includes Backup to Network and XP Mode licensing features.



Windows 7 Home Premium

Home Premium is for retail and pre-install. It supports Aero Glass, Windows Touch and Home Group creation, and includes Windows Media Center and Premium games.



Windows 7 Home Basic

This is for emerging markets only. It includes Fast User Switching, Internet Connection Sharing, Network Bridge and Mobility Center (but without Presentation Mode).

Windows 7 Starter

This is available worldwide, for pre-install only. As with Home Basic, Home Group support is join-only, not create. In a final constraint, Starter has no support for Personalization, so you cannot change the desktop background or theme.

Selecting your Edition

If you are unsure which of these editions of Windows 7 is best for you, it's worth focusing on the features that are included or excluded from one or other edition.

Feature	ST	HB	HP	PR	E/U
Aero Peek, Shake, Glass	-	-	Y	Y	Y
AppLocker , BitLocker	-	-	-	-	Y
Backup to network	-	-	-	Y	Y
Boot from VHD	-	-	-	-	Y
Dolby Digital compatibility	-	-	Y	Y	Y
DVD playback	-	-	Y	Y	Y
Encrypting File System	-	-	-	Y	Y
Fast User Switching	-	Y	Y	Y	Y
Federated Search	-	-	-	-	Y
HomeGroup creation	-	-	Y	Y	Y
IIS Web Server	-	-	Y	Y	Y
Internet Connection Sharing	-	Y	Y	Y	Y
Live Taskbar Previews	-	Y	Y	Y	Y
Multilingual UI packs	-	-	-	-	Y
Multi-Touch, Tablet PC	-	-	Y	Y	Y
Network Bridge	-	Y	Y	Y	Y
Premium games	-	-	Y	Y	Y
Remote Desktop Host	-	-	-	Y	Y
Snipping Tool, Sticky Notes	-	-	Y	Y	Y
Windows DVD Maker	-	-	Y	Y	Y
Windows Flip 3D	-	-	Y	Y	Y
Windows Journal	-	-	Y	Y	Y
Windows Media Center	-	-	Y	Y	Y
Windows Sideshow	-	-	Y	Y	Y
XP Mode licensed	-	-	-	Y	Y

If any of these features are ones that you must have, this will dictate the editions that you need to investigate in more detail. In practice, the choice for home use is normally between the Home Premium and Professional editions, with the Ultimate edition being the alternative for the full home and business features. For travelling, you may find a netbook with Starter edition pre-installed will meet your needs.

Don't forget



The six editions of Windows 7 are:

ST	Starter
HB	Home Basic
HP	Home Premium
PR	Professional
E	Enterprise
U	Ultimate

Hot tip



If you choose a lower function edition and discover you do need additional features, you have the opportunity to upgrade your edition to a higher level (see page 18).

Hot tip

Check at the Microsoft website for your location, or with your software retail store, to find the latest prices for Windows 7 full and upgrade editions.

Don't forget

Promotional prices for pre-orders of Windows 7 upgrade editions were also offered, but the deadline for these expired before the product became generally available.

Upgrades

If you are planning to install Windows 7 on an existing computer running Windows XP or Windows 2000, you can purchase an upgrade copy rather than the full copy. The contents are the same, but you pay a reduced price because you are replacing a qualifying operating system.

As an indication of the relative cost of the editions and the saving with an upgrade, the US\$ prices at launch time were:

● Home Premium	\$199.99	\$119.99
● Professional	\$299.99	\$199.99
● Ultimate	\$319.99	\$219.99

Microsoft also announced a Windows 7 Family pack which provides three upgrade licenses of the Home Premium edition. This is being made available at a promotional price of \$149.99.



Whichever edition of Windows 7 you choose, the DVD supplied actually contains all the editions. It is the product key that unlocks your particular edition. This gives you another option – the Windows Anytime Upgrade.

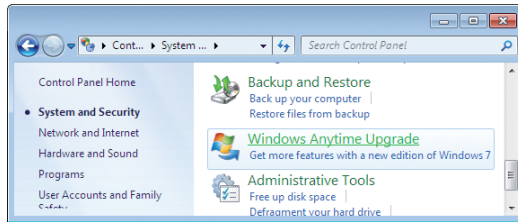
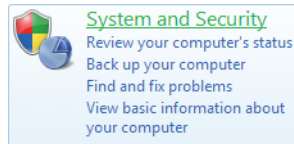


● Starter	→ Home Premium	\$79.99
● Starter	→ Professional	\$114.99
● Starter	→ Ultimate	\$164.99
● Home Premium	→ Professional	\$89.99
● Home Premium	→ Ultimate	\$139.99
● Professional	→ Ultimate	\$129.99

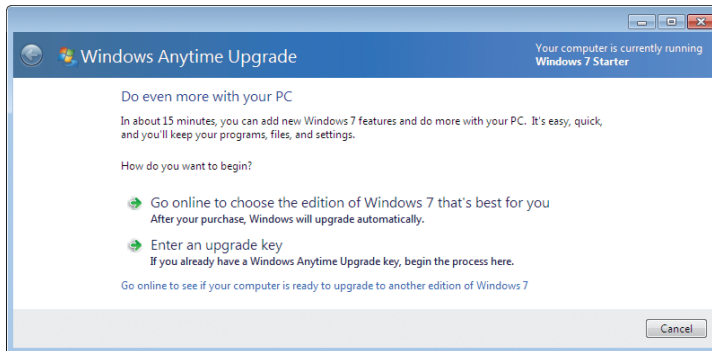
Whether you buy the WAU retail package from a store or make your purchase online from Windows 7, the upgrade takes only 10 or 15 minutes. No DVD is required – all you need is the upgrade key. Your current programs, files, and settings will remain intact.

...cont'd

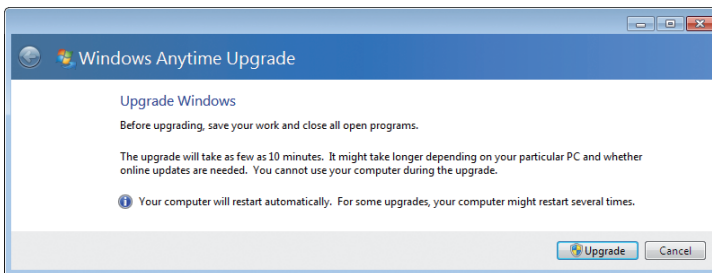
- 1 Select Start, Control Panel and System and Security



- 2 Scroll down and select Windows Anytime Upgrade



- 3 Choose to select and purchase an edition online, or to enter and verify your WAU upgrade key



- 4 Follow the prompts to upgrade to the new edition

Hot tip



In this example, the current configuration is Starter which can be upgraded to Home Premium, Professional or Ultimate.

Hot tip



You can choose to go online to see if your computer is ready to upgrade. This allows you to download and run the Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor (see page 15).

Don't forget



The upgrade will not change your settings and data or remove programs. However, it is still best to ensure that you have a current backup (see page 232).

Don't forget

The hardware requirements for Windows 7 (see page 14) specify a 32-bit or 64-bit processor. These terms relate to the way the processor handles memory.

Hot tip

The retail packages have DVDs for both types of processor. The supplied product key can be used with either, but once activated, it will be restricted to that particular computer.

Don't forget

Here the ASUS Eee PC Netbook is 32-bit only, while the Dell E520, though it has a 32-bit system installed, is actually 64-bit capable.

32-Bit versus 64-Bit

The 64-bit processor can handle large amounts of memory. However, this does depend on having the 64-bit version of the Windows operating system installed. Otherwise, the processor would be subject to the 32-bit restrictions.

This table shows the editions of Windows 7 that offer 64-bit versions, and the maximum memory they support.

Processor type	ST	HB	HP	PR	E/U
32-bit	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Max memory (GB)	4	4	4	4	4
64-bit	-	-	Y	Y	Y
Max memory (GB)	-	-	16	192	192

To check which Windows you are currently running:

1

Open the System Properties (see page 11) to see the system type currently installed

Asus Eee PC

Dell E520

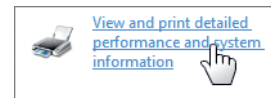
System		System	
Rating:	2.1 Windows Experience Index	Rating:	4.1 Windows Experience Index
Processor:	Intel(R) Atom(TM) CPU N280 1.66GHz 1.67 GHz	Processor:	Intel(R) Core(TM)2 CPU 6400 @ 2.13GHz 2.13 GHz
Installed memory (RAM):	1.00 GB	Installed memory (RAM):	4.00 GB (3.00 GB usable)
System type:	32-bit Operating System	System type:	32-bit Operating System
Pen and Touch:	No Pen or Touch Input is available for this Display	Pen and Touch:	No Pen or Touch Input is available for this Display

2

Click Windows Experience Index, then click View and print detailed performance and system information

Asus Eee PC

Dell E520



System		System	
Manufacturer	ASUSTeK Computer INC.	Manufacturer	Dell Inc.
Model	1000HE	Model	Dell DM061
Total amount of system memory	1.00 GB RAM	Total amount of system memory	4.00 GB RAM
System type	32-bit operating system	System type	32-bit operating system
Number of processor cores	1	Number of processor cores	2
64-bit capable	No	64-bit capable	Yes

3

This says whether or not the system is 64-bit capable

...cont'd

Where the computer already has a 64-bit operating system installed, System Properties shows this, and so the details do not need to explicitly state the computer is 64-bit capable.

System			
Rating:	 Windows Experience Index	Manufacturer	Dell Inc.
Processor:	Intel(R) Core(TM)2 CPU 6400 @ 2.13GHz 2.13 GHz	Model	Dell DM061
Installed memory (RAM):	4.00 GB	Total amount of system memory	4.00 GB RAM
System type:	64-bit Operating System	System type	64-bit operating system
Pen and Touch:	No Pen or Touch Input is available for this Display	Number of processor cores	2

Maximum Physical Memory

One final thing to check is the maximum physical memory that can be installed in your computer. This is usually less than the operating system supports, for example:

Make and Model	Type	Max Memory
ASUS Eee 1000HE	Netbook	2 GB
ASUS V4P5P43	Desktop	8 GB
ASUS RS161-E5/PA2	Server	64 GB

The benefits of 64-bit processing will become apparent when you have 4 GB or more memory installed in your computer and when you are running several programs at the same time and switching between them.

You'll get further benefits with applications optimized for 64-bit processing. Games for example often include such enhancements. The new version of Microsoft is also available in 64-bit, as are video products such as Adobe Photoshop.

You'll still be able to run 32-bit applications under the 64-bit operating system, though this might slow down due to the need to convert addresses.

However, remember that the existing 32-bit drivers for your devices will not run under the 64-bit operating system, so you must ensure that you can get 64-bit versions of the drivers. You may find this a problem when you want to attach older devices to your computer.

Beware



Choosing a 64-bit system means that you can no longer run 16-bit applications. This would only be a problem if you use very old software.

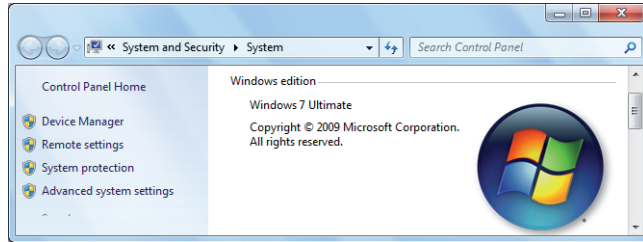
Hot tip

Activation is the process by which Microsoft associates your specific copy of Windows 7 with your computer.

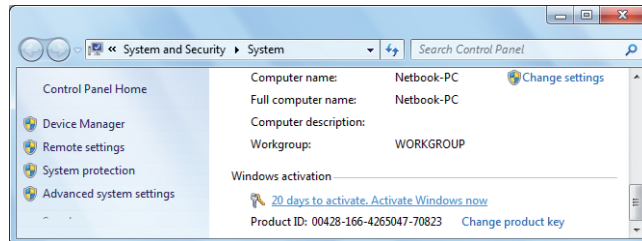
Activation

Your copy of Windows 7 must be activated before you can apply an upgrade, and in any event within 30 days of first using the system. To check the current status:

- 1 Open the System Properties (see page 11)



- 2 Scroll to the bottom of the System details to view the Windows Activation status

**Don't forget**

If Activation was specified when your system was installed, it will be completed automatically three days after first use.

- 3 If your copy of Windows 7 is not yet activated, click **Activate Windows Now** and follow the prompts
- 4 When this completes, System Properties will now show the status as **Activated**

